

the Outlook

As we approach the New Year weather patterns will continue to play a major role in supplies and quality of produce. Very cold temperatures along with strong winds are expected across the Southwestern Desert growing regions into early next week. The winter season along the West Coast of California is a battle between high and low-pressure systems.

In the spring, summer and fall high-pressure systems block the storm track from the north and bring in warm air from the interior/inland regions. These blocking patterns can last days even weeks at times. During the winter these high-pressure systems are quickly moved out as storms roll in and bring in very cold air from the north. This is a continuous battle during the winter season. Storm systems are generally moving in from the Gulf of Alaska with the occasional system coming from the south with associated tropical moisture. As these low and high pressures systems battle for control, they produce tremendous winds as the low forces the high to the east. These powerful winds generally impact the Southern California the Southwestern Desert regions and Northern Mexico as these systems move through.

The very cold air mass then moves into the regions behind the system delivering frost and freezing morning temperatures to the interior valleys and Desert locals. This can delay harvesting in the region until temperatures warm sufficiently for harvests to resume. More critical to crop development is the actual soil temperatures. When soil temperatures reach the low 50's crops begin to shut down for protection slowing growth rates to a crawl. Current soil temperatures are nearing this critical point in the desert locals with some very cold temperatures expected once again this week. Of course, these cold temperatures will affect the quality of crops with Blister, EP, discoloration and lesser texture the result. Freezing ground temperatures will pull moisture from the plants back into the soil leaving a thin, weaker texture.

Crops become very susceptible to wind, rain, and pathogens and can take days or even weeks to recover from the freezing ground temperatures. Traditionally the month of January provides the coldest temperatures in these regions and we will have to wait and see what Mother Nature has in store for us this season.

We will continue to monitor the situation and keep you up to date as we gather the information. Be prepared for shortages and possible loading delays along with lesser texture, quality and shelf life for the near term at a minimum.

